

Message Text

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44

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 AGR-05 COME-00 TRSE-00 SSO-00

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6229

INFO AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

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SAN JOSE FOR AGATT

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, PN

SUBJECT: PANAMA'S 1976 MEAT QUOTA

REF: PANAMA 8007

1. EMBOFFS MET WITH DR. ROSINDO SAENZ, HEAD OF THE MEAT MARKETING SECTION OF THE AGRICULTURAL MARKETING INSTITUTE, AT HIS REQUEST. SAENZ REITERATED REQUEST PREVIOUSLY MADE BY VICE-MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE GUSTAVO GONZALEZ FOR A 10 MILLION LB. QUOTA FOR 1976, AND AGAIN STATED THAT A NOTE WOULD BE FORTHCOMING FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALLY STATING GOP POSITION ON QUOTA. EMBOFFS SUGGESTED TIMELY DELIVERY OF NOTE, INASMUCH AS 1976 QUOTA LEVELS WERE CURRENTLY BEING REVIEWED IN WASHINGTON.

2. DR. SAENZ PRESENTED ARGUMENT, PREVIOUSLY EMPLOYED BY VICE-MINISTER GONZALEZ, THAT PANAMA'S 1975 QUOTA WAS BASED ON UNREPRESENTATIVE ANNUAL BEEF EXPORT FIGURES. HE POINTED OUT THAT HIGH-CAPACITY MEAT PROCESSING PLANT RECENTLY ESTABLISHED AS A JOINT VENTURE BY KARNE S.A. AND CENTRAL-AMERICAN BEEF TO PRODUCE SUASAGES, STEW MEAT AND VARIOUS STEAKS WAS AN
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INDICATION OF CONTINUING INTEREST IN ALSO BUILDING UP EXPORTS

OF PANAMANIAN BEEF EXEMPT FROM
VOLUNTARY RESTRAINT LEVELS. THEREFORE, REQUEST FOR INCREASED
QUOTA SHOULD NOT BE VIEWED AS MERE ATTEMPT TO RE-EXPORT
AUSTRALIAN BEEF TO US, BUT RATHER AS INTEGRAL PART OF GOP
PROGRAM OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT.

3. COMMENT: AS INDICATED IN REFTTEL, GOP REACTION TO A
REQUEST FOR AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE TO CONCLUDE VOLUNTARY
RESTRAINT AGREEMENT FOR 1976 WILL MOST LIKELY BE NEGATIVE
UNLESS SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN LEVEL IS OFFERED. ORIGINAL
REQUEST FOR SUCH AGREEMENT IN 1975 (ON BASIS OF 3 MILLION LB
LEVEL) EVOKED NEGATIVE RESPONSE. WE SUBSEQUENTLY LOWERED
RESTRAINT LEVEL OFFERED TO 2.5 MILLION, AND AGREEMENT UNDER
PROTEST WAS EVENTUALLY ACHIEVED ONLY AFTER EXTRAORDINARY
EFFORTS AT HIGHEST LEVEL. THIS LEVEL IS LOWER THAN ACTUAL
US IMPORTS OF MEAT FROM PANAMA SUBJECT TO IMPORT PROGRAM FOR
EACH OF PAST EIGHT YEARS, WITH ONE EXCEPTION (1967, 3.0 MILLION
LBS; 1968, 4.3; 1969, 3.4; 1970, 5.1; 1971, 2.7; 1972, 4.9;
1973, 2.1; 1974, 2.9). WE WONDER WHETHER THIS IS USUAL CASE
FOR OTHER MEAT EXPORTERS COOPERATING UNDER RESTRAINT PROGRAM.
PANAMA HAS IN ADDITION SHIPPED ESTIMATED TWO TO THREE
MILLION LBS OF MEAT ANNUALLY TO CANAL ZONE DURING THIS PERIOD.
JORDEN

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